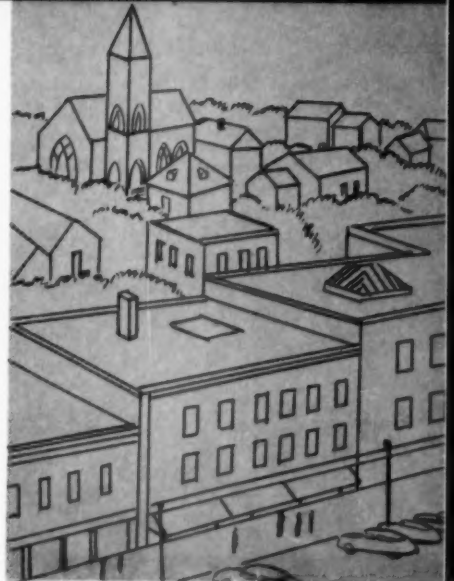
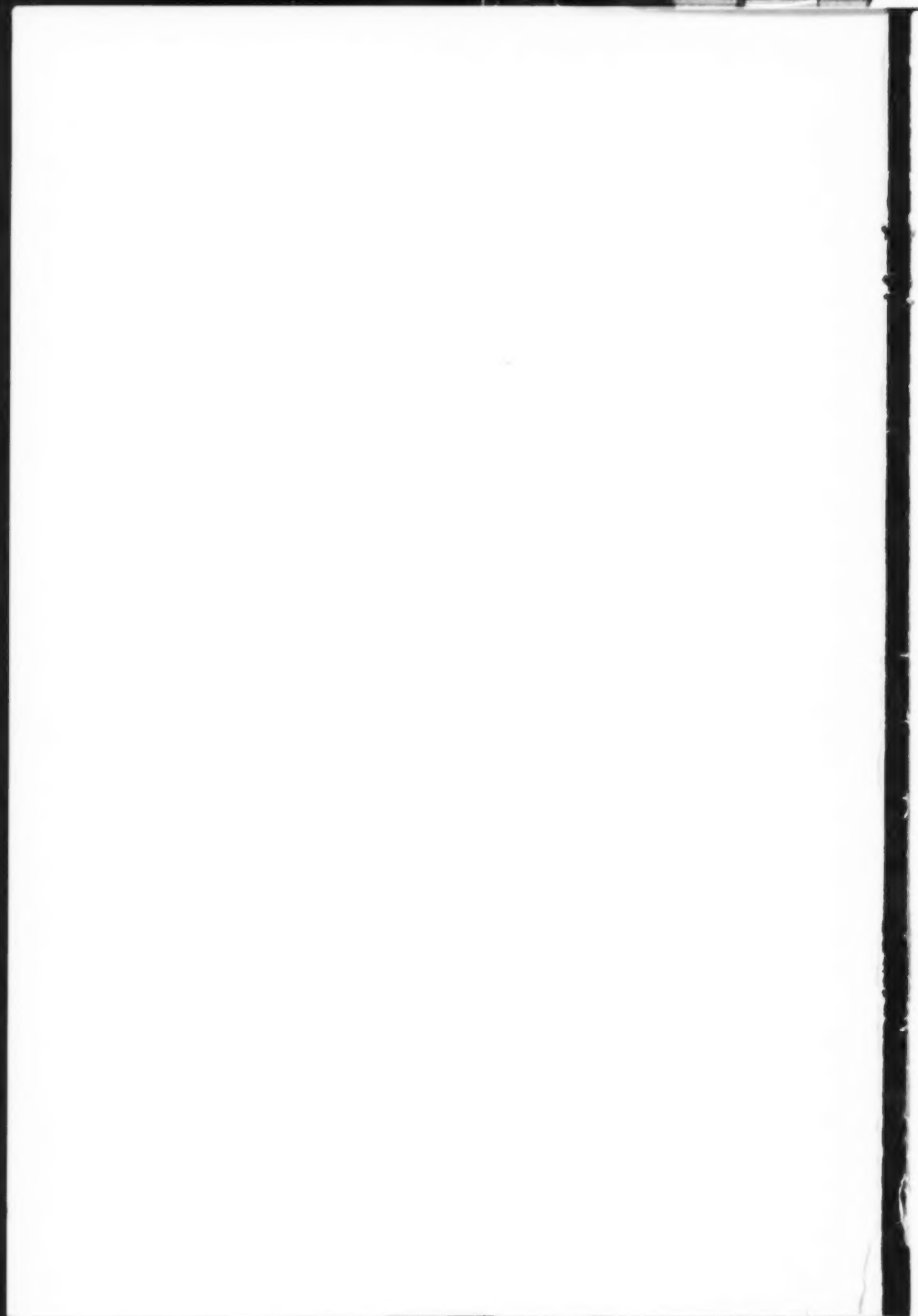


Know Your Community

With a Community Self-Survey

W. W. REEDER AND R. G. GILPIN, JR.





KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

With a Community Self-Survey

WILLIAM W. REEDER AND ROBERT G. GILPIN, JR.

Most of us are interested in one way or another in trying to make our communities better places in which to live. In almost every community there are organizations and individuals that act as leaders in developing community betterment projects. One of the first problems such leaders must face is choosing a good project—a project that will really “better” the community—and an intelligent choice of projects can only arise from a broad understanding of local needs and attitudes. At the request of many community leaders in New York State who felt that they needed some help in getting this information, the Department of Rural Sociology has developed a community self-survey tool with suggestions on how to use it.

The community self-survey is an inexpensive tool which can be used without the aid of specialists. It gives an up-to-date picture of your community—its needs, problems and strong points—as seen by the residents themselves. It brings out the problem areas and shows their relative importance, making it easier to decide which ones should be singled out for immediate action. It also focuses attention on these problem areas and stimulates public interest and cooperation in projects.

Since it was first conceived, the community self-survey has been tried in many localities, where it has stimulated a variety of useful community betterment projects. One sponsoring group received a first prize at the 1954 New York State Fair for its community self-survey. The experiences

of all of these groups have been used in reevaluating and improving the self-survey. We hope that if you decide to take a self-survey in your community, you also will share your experiences with us.

Here is how the community self-survey works:

The Job of the Sponsoring Group

One or two organizations may start the idea of a self-survey, but they should get the cooperation and support of other community leaders in planning and sponsoring it. The presidents representing the major organizations in your community plus individuals who have a real interest in community improvement are suggested, because the survey involves the whole community—both in gathering data and in taking action based on the findings. When organization and official leaders are invited to share in planning the survey, they are more likely to give it their support and help carry out the action that follows. The number of meetings this larger group of leaders holds is up to you, but it is suggested that they at least be invited to share in the decision to make the survey, to help choose the questions, and later to review the findings and help decide how the community can best be informed of the results.

The questionnaire form which we suggest is in Appendix A. It has been tested successfully by many communities and found to obtain the information they needed. However, you may wish to make some additions or changes to fit your specific case.

The most economical way to take the community self-survey is to have forms filled in at the meetings of several community organizations. To get a good cross-section, organizations should be chosen which cover all geographic areas and all age, social, religious and economic groups in the community. Arrange for 30-40 minutes at a meeting of each organization, and have members fill out and return the questionnaire in the meeting. Experience has shown that persons who take the forms home to answer have good intentions of returning them but usually get side tracked into something else and do not return them.

Conducting the survey in organization meetings in this manner saves time and effort and fosters greater interest on the part of the organization participating. The results, though not completely representative of the entire community, are accurate enough for the purposes for which they are used, and provide a far more accurate picture than most communities ordinarily have at their disposal. Individual home visits are necessary to get a completely representative picture. This is far more costly in time and effort. For any community which feels it needs greater accuracy, however, suggestions on procedures are given in Appendix C.

Young people can be reached effectively through the schools.

In each organization, a well-qualified member should be chosen to conduct the survey. These people should be invited to a meeting in which the survey and its potential values to the community are explained. They may then be asked to fill out the question form as a demonstration of how they will be expected to conduct their own meetings. Suggestions for explaining and distributing the questionnaires appear later. Perhaps you will wish to copy them and give each organization representative a copy to refer to.

When you have gathered the data, invite several people to help to tabulate the results. This not only spreads the amount of work so that it is not a burden to anyone, but also stimulates the interest of the workers in the results.

You are also likely to find many people, such as school administrators and town clerks, who are skilled in tabulating and presenting data and who have the equipment to do it. Their cooperation may save you a great deal of time and help you get your data into the most easily understood form.

To keep the community informed and interested in the survey, make the fullest possible use of your local newspaper and radio station. Remember that they offer the fastest and most economical means of telling your story to the whole community.

The Job of Those Who Give the Questionnaire

Your main task is, of course, conducting the meeting in which the questionnaire is filled out. It is one of the most important steps in getting good, clear information. To do the best job possible you need to do some planning in advance. Encourage all the "interviewers" to attend the meeting which the sponsoring group calls to familiarize them with the questionnaire. Give them opportunity to fill out the questionnaire themselves in a demonstration of how such a meeting should be conducted; and clear up any questions they may have about it. Before they conduct their own meetings, they should read carefully the steps suggested below on how to proceed:

1. Provide each person with a question form and a pencil. It is a good idea to have extra pencils and question forms on hand.
2. Start off by giving a brief explanation of the survey, including who is sponsoring it, what its purposes are, and why it is important that they give as complete information as possible. Since there is a fairly good explanation on the front of the question form, you may wish to read the explanation aloud while they follow along on their own copies. After you have finished, tell them that you will answer their questions individually. Expe-

rience has shown that most inquiries can be cleared up by rereading the questions and the instructions. There should be few, if any, which need to be brought to the attention of the rest of the group. Do your best to clarify, but avoid suggesting answers or influencing their opinions in any way. You may also wish to announce that the survey is anonymous and that they do not have to sign their names.

3. Do your best to establish a relaxed, unhurried atmosphere. Try to see that everyone has enough time to complete the questionnaire without rushing. Because anonymity is usually important to persons answering the questionnaire, avoid looking over anyone's shoulder as he answers the questions or reading his answers when he hands in the paper.

4. To help preserve anonymity, provide a box for people to drop their questionnaires in when they have finished them. When all the forms are completed, tie them in a secure bundle marked with the name of the group and return them to the survey chairman.

The Job of Those Tabulating the Data

Before you begin the actual tabulations, you will want to decide what groups of people you wish to compare (based on the questions "About Yourself"). Then sort the question forms into these groups. For example, suppose you decide to compare the opinions of younger people with those of older people, and newcomers with long-time residents. You would first divide the forms into two stacks; one for people 35 years and younger, and one for those over 35. Then you could divide each of these stacks again into one group for persons who had been residents of the community for 10 years or less and one for residence over 10 years. These four stacks should be labeled for identification and kept separate from one another throughout tabulation. When the totals are complete for each stack, you can make comparisons by combining groups. For instance, if you wanted to compare the views of all old-timers with those of all new residents, you would combine totals for the two age groups having over 10 years' residence, and those for the two having 10 years or less.

In actually tabulating the data, you will probably find that the questions on adequacy of services (1-103 in Appendix A) can best be handled by several teams of two persons each. Assign each team one or two pages, and have them do the same pages on all of the question forms. On each team, have one person read the answers and the other record them. A sheet set up as follows has been found convenient for tabulating these questions:

ADEQUACY OF SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A N S W E R S

Question Numbers	Very Adequate	Fairly Adequate	Inadequate
1	///	WHT 1	///
2	///	///	WHT 1
3	////	WHT //	1

The recorder simply writes the number of the question in the left-hand column of this form and tabulates the answer in the appropriate column, using four straight vertical lines and a cross line for each five answers to facilitate counting. With one person reading and the other recording, the job moves quickly, and it speeds up further as they become familiar with the questions and with working together.

For tabulating the "open-end" questions on the needs of your community and the local leaders (p. 15 in Appendix A), choose able persons. For these questions, it will probably be easier for them to work alone than in pairs. Use either one large sheet of paper (11 x 17 inches) or several standard size sheets. List the headings or subheadings for each question, leaving plenty of room to write the answers. List the answers as they appear, putting a check mark after each one every time it appears after the first. Thus you might have under Question II:

In Recreation —
Swimming pool
Playground
Summer camp for children

You may not wish to tabulate the information "About Yourself," other than to use it to sort into groups for comparison. However, if you do, you can use the same procedure as for the first questions, with teams of two tabulators. The numbers of possible answers should be listed down the left side of 8½ x 11 inch sheets and the number of answers to each noted beside it.

The Job of Those Presenting the Findings

Before attempting to write up your findings, consider for what purpose the report is to be used, and what people are likely to be interested in the results. These two things will be important in deciding on the form your

report will take. In any event, include information on the purpose of the survey, its sponsors, where the questions came from, and what people answered them. In Appendix B, you will find a sample report which shows one way of handling the information. It follows the questionnaire very closely and is one of the easier methods. However, other forms of reporting may suit your purpose better. Visual aids such as graphs and charts can do much to add to the effectiveness of your presentation. Here are a few general suggestions which have been found helpful in presenting the reports of several communities:

1. Mimeographed reports emphasize the results far more than newspaper publication or verbal announcements alone. If a person has a printed copy, he will be able to refer back to it time and again; he better informed himself, and better able to pass along accurate information to others. Those who filled out the questionnaire are likely to be especially interested, and presenting the report in the same order as the questions were presented is helpful to them in following it. The report can also be used over a period of time to check what has been accomplished.

2. It is best to give some explanation about the kinds of questions asked and how they were to be answered. In this way people who have not filled out the questionnaire, or have forgotten the details, can have a good idea of what it is all about.

3. A summary of highlights or most significant outcomes is very useful. It provides a good basis for group discussion. It is more likely to interest people who become bored or confused by statistical reports. Those who are interested in the figures can find them later in the report.

4. You can focus attention on the groups responsible for taking action by listing the main problems and needs under those groups which would be most logically the ones to see that something is done about them.

5. Percentages are an effective way of presenting results because people are familiar with them.

Some Suggestions for the Use of the Question Form (Appendix A) and the Presentation of Data (Appendix B)

Appendices A and B are condensed samples, showing one way in which the questions and the data may be presented. In both cases you will find at intervals throughout the forms suggestions or clarifying notes in italic type. These are not meant to be parts of the forms themselves, but merely to help you understand them and to visualize them as they might appear in actual use. We suggest that when the forms are prepared for use, they be given attractive cover sheets, perhaps of colored paper, bearing the titles and introductory notes as outlined here for each.

Appendix A

A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR COMMUNITY

What Are Its Strong Points?
What Are Its Problems and Needs?
Who Are Its Leaders?

What This Is All About

A number of citizens and groups in the _____ community area have been interested in getting ideas about what things could be done to improve the _____ community. They didn't want the opinions of only a few individuals who might know each other and think alike, but desired to get a fair picture from people all over the community area. Therefore, a number of individuals and groups have been asked to give their opinions. Your answers will be combined with those of others to give a better all-around picture. The results will be reported to the community and will provide the information needed by community groups wishing to sponsor community improvement projects. If their projects are good, everyone will benefit.

Do not sign your name; we do not wish to know who any individual is. What we want is your frank ideas, opinions and feelings.

You may have some ideas and suggestions not covered by the questions asked. Feel free to write any comments you would like to make in the space provided at the end.

How Adequate Are the Services and Opportunities Which Are Conveniently Available to You, Your Family and Your Neighbors?

Here are some of the services and opportunities which people have said they would like to have available to them. How adequately are the following services and opportunities being supplied in the area in which you live? (The term adequate refers to both the quantity and quality of the service available.)

If you think there are important items which have been omitted, mention them in the section following this one.

Circle the number of the answer
which comes nearest to express-
ing your opinion.

Very Fairly
Adequate Adequate Inadequate

HOME SERVICES

1. Adequate and healthful water supply	1	2	3
2. Garbage disposal	1	2	3
3. Sewage disposal	1	2	3
4. Pest control services	1	2	3
<u>Decent housing for permanent residents</u>			
5. For high income families	1	2	3
6. For middle income families	1	2	3
7. For low income families	1	2	3
8. Decent rentals	1	2	3

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMU- NICATION SERVICES

9. Transportation in and out of the community (bus and train)	1	2	3
10. Transportation within the commu- nity (taxi and bus)	1	2	3
11. Good roads	1	2	3
12. Newspapers (news, advertising, etc.)	1	2	3
13. Telephones	1	2	3
14. Postal services	1	2	3
15. Parking facilities	1	2	3
16. Trucking services	1	2	3
17. Street lighting	1	2	3
18. Sidewalks	1	2	3
19. Snow removal services	1	2	3

PROTECTION SERVICES

Police Protection

20. Village	1	2	3
21. Open country	1	2	3
22. Traffic control	1	2	3
23. Safety regulation	1	2	3

Very Fairly
Adequate Adequate Inadequate

Fire Protection

24. In the open country	1	2	3
In the village:	1	2	3
25. Fire department	1	2	3
26. Fire regulation	1	2	3
27. Fire inspection	1	2	3

HEALTH SERVICES

28. Medical care in case of illness	1	2	3
29. Dental care	1	2	3
30. Hospital facilities	1	2	3
31. Medicine and drug services	1	2	3
32. Health services designed to help people maintain good health and stay well (public nurse, etc.)	1	2	3
33. Veterinary services	1	2	3

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAKING A
LIVING

Employment Opportunities

34. For persons under 18 years	1	2	3
35. For persons 18-30 years	1	2	3
36. For persons 30-64 years	1	2	3
37. For persons 65 years or over	1	2	3

Services for Persons Seeking Employment

38. For persons under 18 years	1	2	3
39. For person 18-64 years	1	2	3
40. For persons 65 years or over	1	2	3

Loan Services

41. Short term	1	2	3
42. Long term	1	2	3
43. Financial aid to care for needs of unemployable persons who are in need	1	2	3
44. Financial aid to care for employable persons who are out of work and are in need	1	2	3
45. Marketing facilities and opportunities	1	2	3

Very Fairly
Adequate Adequate Inadequate

SERVICES FOR THOSE WHO ARE
PARTICULARLY IN NEED OF
HELP AND GUIDANCE

46. Care for aged persons	1	2	3
47. Prevention of adult delinquency	1	2	3
48. Care for adult delinquents	1	2	3
49. Prevention of juvenile delinquency	1	2	3
50. Care for juvenile delinquents	1	2	3
51. Help for people who need advice and guidance in solving their problems	1	2	3

CONSTRUCTIVE LEISURE TIME
OPPORTUNITIES AND FACILI-
TIES

52. Outdoor recreation facilities	1	2	3
53. Indoor recreation facilities	1	2	3
54. Recreational opportunities for chil- dren	1	2	3
55. Recreational opportunities for teen- agers	1	2	3
56. Recreational opportunities for young adults	1	2	3
57. Wholesome entertainment	1	2	3
58. Athletic activities	1	2	3
59. Family recreation	1	2	3
60. Interesting and useful activities for retired persons	1	2	3

OPPORTUNITIES TO BELONG TO
ORGANIZATIONS AND
GROUPS WHICH SUPPLY SO-
CIABILITY NEEDS

61. Wholesome family life	1	2	3
62. Opportunities to belong to friendly groups of common age and interests	1	2	3
63. Opportunities to pursue hobbies and special interests	1	2	3
64. Adequate meeting places	1	2	3

Very Fairly
Adequate Adequate Inadequate

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

AND FACILITIES

Elementary Education

65. Buildings and equipment	1	2	3
66. School staff	1	2	3
67. Quality of educational program	1	2	3

Secondary Education

68. Buildings and equipment	1	2	3
69. School staff	1	2	3
70. Quality of educational program	1	2	3
71. Parent-teacher contacts	1	2	3

Informal Educational Opportunities

72. Scouts and other youth programs	1	2	3
73. Lectures, concerts, etc.	1	2	3
74. Discussion groups	1	2	3
75. Library services	1	2	3
76. Adult educational opportunities	1	2	3
77. Extension service opportunities	1	2	3
78. Religious educational opportunities	1	2	3
79. Health educational opportunities	1	2	3
80. Safety educational opportunities	1	2	3
81. Vocational educational opportunities	1	2	3

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

82. Opportunities for religious worship for all faiths having groups in com- munity	1	2	3
83. Special holiday services	1	2	3
84. Youth activities	1	2	3
85. Cooperation among churches	1	2	3

BEAUTIFICATION

86. Appearance and upkeep of stores and business district.	1	2	3
87. Appearance and upkeep of homes, yards	1	2	3
88. Beautification and care of public buildings, grounds, parks and streets	1	2	3
89. Well-kept cemetery	1	2	3

Very Fairly
Adequate Adequate Inadequate

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT
SERVICES

90. Civic organizations (Chamber of Commerce, Women's Club, Volunteer Firemen, etc.)	1	2	3
91. Coordination of organizations and activities	1	2	3
92. Zoning provisions	1	2	3
93. Fund raising services	1	2	3
94. Cooperation among organizations	1	2	3
95. Willingness of organizations to support and work for worthwhile causes	1	2	3
96. Willingness of community members to support and work for worthwhile causes	1	2	3

COMMUNITY HOSPITALITY

97. Decent housing for travelers	1	2	3
98. Reception for new residents	1	2	3
99. Public rest rooms	1	2	3

LEADERSHIP

100. Well-qualified leaders willing to lead youth groups	1	2	3
101. Well-qualified adult leaders willing to lead adult groups	1	2	3
102. Opportunities to develop leadership skills and abilities	1	2	3
103. Leadership training for people who are selected as officers and teachers in organizations and groups	1	2	3

Every community has some strong points and also points where improvement could be made. (In this case we speak of the community as _____ and the smaller villages and the open country within the area where people come to _____ for shopping and for other services.)

- I. What are some of the things you particularly like about this community, that is, some of its strong points?

(Leave a few lines.)

- II. In the following areas of community life what, in your opinion, are the main problems and needs?

(List the following topics, with a few lines after each one: recreation, health and safety, education, employment, beautification, welfare, governmental affairs, religion, organizational affairs, other.)

COMMUNITY LEADERS

- A. In your opinion who are the five or six persons in _____ community and surrounding area who usually are the first ones to suggest new projects or new ideas for improving something in the community? (Give the names of the persons you would include.)

(Leave six blank lines here and also after Items B and C.)

- B. In your opinion, who are the five or six persons in the _____ community and surrounding area who are most influential in deciding whether a proposed community project gets the nod of approval and the green light or whether it gets rejected? (Give the names of the persons whom you would include.)
- C. In your opinion who are the five or six persons in the _____ community and surrounding area who are most influential in getting projects accomplished and completed after they have been agreed upon? (Give the names of the persons whom you would include.)
- D. What organizations, businesses or groups are most influential in deciding what happens in the community, and in getting something accomplished in the community?

Most influential in deciding what happens: _____ Most influential in getting something accomplished: _____

(Leave four blank lines.)

(Leave four blank lines.)

ABOUT YOURSELF

1. Are you:
 1. ☐ Male
 2. ☐ Female
2. Are you:
 1. ☐ Single
 2. ☐ Married
 3. ☐ Widowed, divorced, separated
3. What is your age?
 1. ☐ 15-24 years
 2. ☐ 25-34 years
 3. ☐ 35-44 years
 4. ☐ 45-54 years
 5. ☐ 55-64 years
 6. ☐ 65 or over
4. What is the highest grade you completed in school?
 1. ☐ 8th grade or less
 2. ☐ Some high school
 3. ☐ High school graduate
 4. ☐ Some college or special training beyond high school
 5. ☐ College graduate
5. What is your main occupation?
 1. ☐ Farmer, farm manager
 2. ☐ Hired farm worker
 3. ☐ Proprietor, manager, official
 4. ☐ Clerical, sales, or similar work
 5. ☐ Skilled or semi-skilled trade
 6. ☐ Unskilled laborer
 7. ☐ Operator or service worker
 8. ☐ Professional or semi-professional worker
 9. ☐ Homemaker
 10. ☐ Student
 11. ☐ I am retired
 12. ☐ I am unemployed
 13. ☐ Other: What? _____
6. What is your religious denomination?

☐ None

7. About how much income did the family heads (husband, wife) make last year?
 1. ☐ Less than \$2000
 2. ☐ Between \$2000 and \$3000
 3. ☐ Between \$3000 and \$5000
 4. ☐ Between \$5000 and \$7000
 5. ☐ Over \$7000

8. How many children are there living at home in your family?
Number
- _____ None
- _____ Under 10 years of age
- _____ 11-15 years of age
- _____ 16-24 years of age
- _____ Over 25 years of age
9. Where do you live?
1. _____ in _____
(name of community)
2. _____ in another small village
or hamlet in the trade
area
3. _____ in the open country
10. How many years have you lived within this _____ community area?
1. _____ years
2. _____ all my life
11. To how many organizations and clubs do you belong which hold their meetings within this community area? (A church congregation, ladies' aid, and Sunday School would be counted as three organizations.) _____
12. In how many of these are you active—that is, attend $\frac{1}{4}$ or more of their meetings? _____
13. How many offices and positions have you held in organizations during the *past 3 years*? If you held the same office for two years, count it twice.
- _____ No. of chief or assistant executive offices (pres., vice pres.)
- _____ No. of secretarial or treasurer's or committee chairmanships
- _____ Teacher, class or group leader or board member
- _____ None

Appendix B*

OUR COMMUNITY AS WE SEE IT

This survey report is based on the ideas and opinions of _____ interested
number
citizens of the _____ community. The question forms were filled
out in meetings. The survey was sponsored and carried out for the most
part by _____ under the chairmanship of _____. A large
number of leaders in the community have given their ideas and advice,
and many community members have helped in the various phases of the
survey.

The survey was aimed at getting a representative picture of the opinions
of local residents on the following areas of community life:

1. The adequacy of certain essential services and opportunities within
the community
2. The strong points and weaknesses of the community
3. The persons and organizations regarded as community leaders

* You will note that the presentation of data in the detailed report, and
also in the highlights, follows the sequence of the original question form.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SURVEY

- A. The question was asked: "How adequate are the services and oppor-
tunities which are conveniently available to you, your family and your
neighbors?" The term "adequate" referred to both the quantity and
quality of the service available.

These 15 Rated Highest	These 15 Rated Lowest
(List 1-15, in descending order,	(List 1-15 in ascending order, with
with the one ranked highest first.)	the lowest first.)

- B. Here are the 12 items which those who took part in the survey liked
most about the community. They are listed in order of rank, with the
most favored items first.

(List 1-12.)

- C. Here are the most frequently mentioned needs of the community, in
order of their rank.

(The length of this list may vary with the size of the community and
the number of items mentioned. Our previous experience indicates
that the average listed is about 20.)

D. The respondents named persons whom they considered to be community leaders of three types: those who suggest new projects and ideas for community improvement; those who are most influential in deciding whether a proposed community project is approved or rejected; and those who are most influential in getting projects completed after they have been approved. The 10 persons listed most often for each of these three groups are given below:

1. Those who suggest new ideas—

(List 10 who were mentioned most often. Do this also under Items 2-3.)

2. Those who influence decisions—

3. Those who see that projects are completed—

E. They were also asked to name the organizations, businesses or groups which they considered to be most influential in deciding what happens in the community, and in getting projects accomplished. Here are the five organizations which were mentioned most often for each of these:

1. Those which are most influential in deciding what happens—

(List five groups.)

2. Those which are most influential in getting projects accomplished—

(List five.)

THE REPORT IN MORE DETAIL

A. SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR COMMUNITY

These are the services and opportunities which are rated on their adequacy. For each item, the answer which received the largest number of responses is underlined to emphasize where the largest portion of opinion lies.

Percentage Answering

Items	Very Adequate	Fairly Adequate	Inadequate
-------	------------------	--------------------	------------

(List items exactly as they were listed in the questionnaire. Underline the largest percentage for each item.)

B. OUR COMMUNITY'S STRONG POINTS, PROBLEMS AND NEEDS

Here is a more complete list of the things respondents said they liked about this community:

Items	Frequency of Mention
<i>(List items in descending order, with the most frequently mentioned ones first.)</i>	

In pointing out problems and needs of the community, those who took part in the survey were invited to list them under the following headings: recreation, health and safety, education, employment, beautification and civic improvement, welfare and governmental affairs. These needs are listed below with the number of times each was mentioned. They are divided according to the agencies which can best take care of them:

1. Needs requiring mainly governmental action—
(List all items in descending order, with those mentioned most often first, all the way down to items mentioned only once. To the left of each give the number of times it was mentioned. Do the same for Items 2, 3 and 4.)
2. Needs requiring mainly action from the community or groups and organizations within the community—
3. Needs requiring mainly school action—
4. Needs requiring mainly individual action, perhaps encouraged by the community—

C. OUR COMMUNITY'S LEADERS

Here are complete lists of persons named as leaders in suggesting new ideas; influencing decisions; and seeing that projects are completed:

1. Those who suggest new ideas—
(List all names mentioned in descending order, by number of times mentioned. Do this also for Items 2 and 3.)
2. Those who influence decisions—
3. Those who see that projects are completed—

Organizations which were named as influential in (a) deciding what happens in the community, and (b) getting projects accomplished are:

- (a) *(List in descending order with frequency of mention.)*
- (b) *(as above)*

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE RESPONDENTS

Although we did not ask those who filled out the question forms to give their names, they did furnish some other information to describe themselves:

- ☐ % are men
- ☐ % are women
- ☐ % did not finish high school
- ☐ % are high school graduates
- ☐ % have had some college or special training
- ☐ % are college graduates
- ☐ % have no children
- ☐ % have one or two children
- ☐ % have three or more children
- ☐ % live in _____ (village or city)
- ☐ % live in the surrounding area
- ☐ % have lived in this community less than 10 years
- ☐ % have lived here 10-19 years
- ☐ % have lived here 20-30 years
- ☐ % have lived here more than 30 years
- ☐ % have lived here all their lives
- ☐ % have incomes under \$3000
- ☐ % have incomes between \$3000 and \$5000
- ☐ % have incomes between \$5000 and \$7000
- ☐ % have incomes over \$7000

Appendix C

Some committees may feel that it is worth taking extra time and effort in their particular case to obtain a more completely representative cross-section. Experience has shown that to do this and at the same time secure a large percentage of returns, it is necessary to make personal contacts to distribute and pick up the question forms.

The best quick way to get a representative sample is the random method. If you want 400 adults including both the husband and wife in each family in the sample, and there are 1000 families in the community, you contact every fourth family on each street. If everyone filled out the question forms, this would give you 500, but some will not. Allowing for these rejections and for single person households, you probably will end up with approximately 400.

In order to make these personal contacts and still keep the answers confidential, you may wish to use a device utilized in some studies at Cornell called the "anonymity box." This is simply an ordinary cardboard box which has been fixed with a window of clear plastic on one side and a slot large enough for the question forms to pass through in the top. Some prefer to put the forms in an envelop before putting them into the box. After the forms are dropped in the box, it is shaken a few times so the respondent knows that his form has been mixed with the others in the box.



A publication of the
New York State College of Agriculture,
a unit of the State University of New York,
at Cornell University

AUGUST 1957



Cooperative Extension Service, New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell University and the U. S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. In furtherance of Acts of Congress May 8, June 30, 1914. M. C. Bond, Director of Extension, Ithaca, New York.